

station, Coimbatore, 15-12-1979, P. V. Sreekumar 58038 (MH); near the railway station,

Coimbatore, 23-1-1980, P. V. Sreekumar 58039 (MH).

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38. A REASSESSMENT OF THE TAXONOMIC POSITION AND
STATUS OF *AGLAIA BOURDILLONII* GAMBLE (MELIACEAE)
WITH NOTES ON THE NOMENCLATURE OF RELATED TAXA

Beddome (1871), while illustrating *Aglaia roxburghiana* (Wt. et Arn.) Miq. in Flora Sylvatica, depicted two plants as plates 130A and 130B. Of these two illustrations, figure 130A is based on Beddome's Annamallay (Tamil Nadu) collection and Gamble (1915) described it as a variety namely, *A. roxburghiana* (Wt. et Arn.) Miq. var. *beddomei* Gamble. The figure 130B in FLORA SYLVATICA, based on a specimen from Attramallay ghats (Tamil Nadu) is given with the following note. "B is a variety from Tinnevely hills (Attramallay ghats) a male tree with dessections of the flowers, this variety has leaves obovatespathulate, the dessections all from the male flowers, but the female flowers only differ in having a fertile ovary". Later Gamble (1915) based on the illustration 130B of Beddome (1871) and specimens of Bourdillon exactly matching with it at 'Madras Herbarium' (Gamble 1918) described the species, *A. bourdillonii*.

In the protologue of *A. bourdillonii*, Gamble (Anonymous, 1915) distinguished it from *A. minutiflora* Bedd., a species which he considered to be closely related to *A. bourdillonii*. However a comparison of Beddome's (1874) plate 193, which is the type of *A. minutiflora* with that of *A. bourdillonii* (*Bourdillon s.n.*, Acc. no. 9099, MH) shows that these two species differ considerably in their number

of leaflets in a leaf (i.e. 15 leaflets per leaf in *A. minutiflora* and 5-7 leaflets in a leaf in *A. bourdillonii*) and in the length of the inflorescence (i.e. about 45 cm in *A. minutiflora* and about 15 cm in *A. bourdillonii*). Moreover the acuminate leaflets are stellate-tomentose in *A. minutiflora* whereas in *A. bourdillonii* the leaflets are obtuse or blunt at apex and scaly beneath. Again, in the key to the different species of *Aglaia* Lour. in Flora of the Presidency of Madras, Gamble (1915) considered *A. minutiflora* and *A. bourdillonii* as belonging to one group characterised by exserted stamens. But the stamens in *A. bourdillonii* are included in the corolla tube and this character is also depicted in Beddome's plate 130B. In fact, *A. bourdillonii* is very closely related to *A. roxburghiana* in its habit, size and shape of the leaves, nature of inflorescence and flowers with the stamens enclosed in the corolla tube. And perhaps it is because of these resemblances between the two taxa that Beddome (1871) considered his Attramallay collections as a variant of *A. roxburghiana* and not that of *A. minutiflora* for which he was having specimens at that time.

Regarding the taxonomic status of *A. bourdillonii*, authors like Harms (1940) and Choudhuri (1967) followed Gamble (1915) in treating it as a distinct species. However a study of the collections of *A. bourdillonii* and

A. roxburghiana at Central National Herbarium, Botanical Survey of India (CAL), Herbarium Southern Circle, Botanical Survey of India, Coimbatore (MH) and Herbarium of the Presidency College, Madras (PCM) showed that *A. bourdillonii* differs from *A. roxburghiana* only in the nature of their inflorescence, the former possessing profusely branched longer and comparatively slender flowering branches, whereas in the latter the inflorescence is less branched, shorter and stouter exactly agreeing with the description given by Wight and Arnott (1834). Eventhough slight variations are noticed in the length of the petiole and shape of the leaves, such characters are of little taxonomic significance because of their overlapping nature in these two taxa. Hence it is considered here that *A. bourdillonii* can only rank a varital status under *A. roxburghiana* and this view also gets support from Beddome (1871) who first illustrated *A. bourdillonii* mentioning it only as variety of *A. roxburghiana*.

According to Backer and Bakhuizen van den Brink Jr. (1965) the correct name for *A. roxburghiana* (Wt. et. Arn.) Miq. is *A. elaegnoidea* (Juss.) Benth. Hence the following new combinations are also proposed here to render the nomenclature of *A. roxburghiana* var. *beddomei* Gamble and *A. roxburghiana* var. *courtallensis* Gamble up to date.

1. ***Aglaia elaegnoidea*** (Juss.) Benth. var. ***beddomei*** (Gamble) K.K.N. Nair comb. nov.—*A. roxburghiana* (Wt. et Arn.) Miq. var. *beddomei* Gamble, Fl. Presid. Madras 1:180, 1915.—*A. roxburghiana sensu* Bedd. Fl. Sylvat. t. 130A. 1871.
Type: Flora Sylvatica t. 130A (Icono-

type).

Distribution: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu.

2. ***Aglaia elaegnoidea*** (Juss.) Benth. var. ***bourdillonii*** (Gamble) K.K.N. Nair Stat. et comb. nov.

A. bourdillonii Gamble, Bull. Misc. Inf. Kew 1915: 346-47. 1915 & Fl. Presid. Madras 1: 180. 1915; Harms in Engl. & Prantl. Pflanzenfam. (ed. 2) 19b: 146. 1940; Choudhuri, Bull. Bot. Soc. Bengal 21(1): 6.1967.—*A. roxburghiana sensu* Bedd. Fl. Sylvat. t. 130B. 1871.

Type: Attramallay Ghat, Bourdillon s.n. (Acc. no. 9099, MH).

Distribution: Tirunelveli hills (Tamil Nadu).

3. ***Aglaia elaegnoidea*** (Juss.) Benth. var. ***courtallensis*** (Gamble) K. K. N. Nair. comb. nov.—*A. roxburghiana* (Wt. et. Arn.) var. *courtallensis* Gamble, Fl. Presid. Madras 1: 180. 1915.

Type: Chokampatty, Tirunelveli hills, without collector's name & number (Acc. no. 9058, MH).

Distribution: Tirunelveli hills (Tamil Nadu).

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